

"Piece By Piece -- Decapolis!"

Text: Mark 7:37b, "He hath done all things well; he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak."

Scripture Mark 7:31-37

As we look at the second piece of our Lenten puzzle, we see that Jesus once again is on the move. We read in the beginning of our Scripture that Jesus departed from ~~the~~ Tyre and through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee to Decapolis. Now this is approximately the same as saying that I would go from Butler to Erie to get to Pittsburgh. But this is literally what He did. He moved from Tyre to Sidon which was 25 miles North of Tyre, and thence to the Sea of Galilee which was South of Tyre, and then to Decapolis. Again, when we speak of Decapolis we are talking about an area that is quite large. The word Decapolis means 10 towns. It was a rather large area made up of 10 Greek towns. So when we speak of Jesus being in Decapolis we do not actually know ~~how~~ just where He was located.

All we do know is that if He made this journey North from Tyre to Sidon, and then South to the Sea of Galilee, and on to the area known as Decapolis, it took Him approximately 8 months to do so. Thus we realize that much probably happened in the life of Jesus that is not recorded in any of the Gospels. And all the while He is doing this traveling He is in the territory of Gentiles. It could sort of be called the calm before the storm, due to the fact that His ministry began to be threatened when He returned to the land of the Jews. Then we read that they brought to Him, one who was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech. Now this was not a person who was deaf and dumb, but rather a man who could speak some, but not completely.

Then we read (vs 33) that Jesus took Him aside from the crowd and put his fingers into his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. Now in this we see that first of all, Jesus was not willing to perform His miracles in the open gaze for all to see. He was not trying to show off what He could do. He also probably was concerned for the privacy he must have felt this man wanted and needed. After all, what person wants to have a doctor work on him in the middle of main street. But in this we see the compassion that Jesus had for an

individual. Next He placed his fingers in the man's ears, signifying what He was about to do. And we read that He spat and touched his tongue. The use of saliva as a healing medicine had its origin in ancient times. So Jesus' use of saliva, and touching this to the tongue of the man is in keeping with what ~~ax~~ was a normal procedure.

Then Jesus looked up to heaven which also signified that He wanted the man and others to know from whence came the miracle, and He spoke Aramaic to a man who was evidently ~~Greekxxxxxxxeitherxxxxxx~~ a Gentile and probably a Greek. In little this detail Mark is proving the accuracy of what He is telling, for it would be normal for Jesus to speak Aramaic to someone who spoke Aramaic, but to use it with a person who spoke Greek, it would be useless. Thus by the language that Mark has Jesus using, he indicates that the man was indeed deaf, and so Jesus spoke the language of His followers and not the language of the man being healed. It also indicates by this that Jesus wanted His hearers to know what was going on and was not so much concerned that the ones who spoke Greek around Him knew what was taking place. Perhaps these are little things, but they all add to the truth of what is being said by the writer.

But then we read that the mans ears were opened and his tongue was loosed and he spoke plainly. The miracle had been performed and then Jesus makes a strange request and one that is not honored. We read that he charged them to tell no man, but the more he charged them, the more they told about it. Here we have a glimpse of the Great Saviour. He was not content to do miraculous deeds and then have people build Him up by spreading the Word. Instead, He wants them to remain quiet about it. He was displaying not only modesty about what He could do, but He was wanting to remain anonymous. We must also look upon this in the light that it was not yet the proper time for Him to be revealed as the promised Messiah. We read about this later in the 8th chapter, how He warns the disciples not to tell anyone ~~xxxxxx~~ that He is the Christ. But the people would not be silent, and they told of how He had done these deeds, and Mark says they were astonished beyond measure and said, "He hath done all things well; He maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."

Now in all of this we can see that Jesus was a worker of miracles. But the crowds were not content to merely pass Him off as one who could do a few things. They said, "He ^{hath done} ~~xxxx~~ all things well." This is more than just a lot of praise, for to say that someone can do all things well, is to acclaim him very highly. In these words of Mark, there is a familiar ring about them, and well there should be, because it is the echo the words of God as found in the end of the story of creation in Genesis 1:31, "And God saw all that He had made and behold it was very good." Jesus was reminding people that God had created everything to be perfect and without blemish, and now He was partially setting about restoring that soundness, by creating anew in the lives of people diseased or crippled.

What is also being pointed out in this Scripture is probably the fulfilling of Isaiah 35:5, where we read that the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped, and the lame shall leap, and the tongue of the dumb will speak. All of this is the promise of the Messiah which Jesus was showing that He was. There can be no doubt in anyone's mind that what was beginning to take place in His ministry was things no ordinary man could do and performe.

I have been reminded of this this past week when I read a book about what began to take place in Canada in the year 1972. A man named William Mcleod was working as a coal miner, and felt the call of God to be a preacher. So he first of all preached to his fellow miners, but then felt moved to be the pastor of a church. Without formal education other than grade school, he took the pastorate of a church. One of the first things he did was to minister to a woman dying of terminal cancer, and strangely enough after he prayed for her she recovered. Next he ministered to ~~xxx~~ man who was confined to a wheelchair for years, and after prayer for him he recovered and began to walk. By this time Mr. Mcleod began to know that something was special about his ministry. He began to see things happen in his church. People began to be reconciled with relatives and friends. People who had done things that were wrong like shoplifting and stealing began to pay for the items and to make restitution.

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most
High: shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
BUTLER, PENNSYLVANIA

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT FEBRUARY 16, 1975

REV. RALPH C. LINK, PASTOR
MRS. MARILYN STEPHENSON, ORGANIST
MR. RALPH COOPER, CHOIR DIRECTOR
BRIAN KENNEDY, PAM FRY - ACOLYTES

ORDER OF WORSHIP 11:00 A.M.

PRELUDE MUSIC: "LARGO" HANDEL
"ANDANTE RELIGIOSO" THOME

SILENT PRAYER

*PROCESSIONAL HYMN No. 87 "BE STILL, MY SOUL"

*ASCRPTION - CHORAL AMEN

*EXHORTATION

*CONFESSION (IN UNISON) "O LORD GOD OF OUR FATHERS, WHO
IN THY GOODNESS HAST LED THIS PEOPLE HITHERTO BY WONDROUS
WAYS; WHO MAKEST THE NATIONS TO PRAISE THEE, AND KNITTEST
THEM TOGETHER IN THE BONDS OF PEACE; WE BESEECH THEE TO
POUR THINE ABUNDANT BLESSING ON THIS NATION OVER WHICH
THOU HAST CALLED THY SERVANT OUR PRESIDENT. GRANT THAT
ALL, OF WHATEVER RACE OR COLOUR, OR TONGUE, MAY, IN
PROSPERITY AND PEACE, BE UNITED IN THE BOND OF BROTHER-
HOOD, AND IN THE ONE FELLOWSHIP OF THE FAITH, SO THAT WE
MAY BE FOUND A PEOPLE ACCEPTABLE UNTO THEE; THROUGH
JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN."

*KYRIE (CHOIR, CONGREGATION AND PASTOR)

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON - CHORAL AMEN

*PRAISE

*PASTOR: O LORD OPEN OUR LIPS.

*PEOPLE: AND OUR MOUTH SHALL SHOW FORTH THY PRAISE

*DOXOLOGY No. 551

SCRIPTURE LESSON: MARK 7: 31-37

HYMN No. 164 "IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST I GLORY"

*AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH (APOSTLES' CREED)

*GLORIA PATRI

*CALL TO PRAYER

*PASTOR: THE LORD BE WITH YOU.

*PEOPLE: AND WITH THY SPIRIT.

*PASTOR: LET US PRAY.

*PRAYER AND PRAYER RESPONSE

OFFERING

OFFERTORY "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET" HANDEL
ANTHEM: "HIS DEPTH OF LOVE" ROGERS
SERMON: "PEACE BY PIECE"
"DECAPOLIS"

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

*HYMN OF DEDICATION No. 471 "MORE LOVE TO THEE"

*BENEDICTION AND THREE FOLD AMEN

POSTLUDE: "POSTLUDE"

--- *CONGREGATION STANDING ---

THE LOVELY FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR HAVE BEEN PLACED BY
THE WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP TO THE "GLORY OF GOD"

SERVING AS USHERS TODAY ARE: *DAVID CURTIS
ROBBIE VINROE, ROBERT DELLEN, BRIAN PFABE AND STEVE
SMITH.

DEACON AND MRS. HARRY FRY WILL REPRESENT COUNCIL AT
THE DOOR TODAY.

NURSERY WILL BE PROVIDED TODAY BY MRS. JUDY VINROE
AND PATTY BASEHORE.

THE ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY WAS 153 - WED. 114.

TONIGHT - 6:00-7:00 - YOUTH CHOIR PRACTICE

TONIGHT - 7:00 - YOUTH FELLOWSHIP MEETING.

WEDNESDAY - 7:30 - LENTEN SERVICE

WEDNESDAY - GOLDEN CIRCLE MEETING RIGHT AFTER THE SERVICE.

BRING SCISSORS - THEY WILL BE MAKING LAP ROBES FOR V.A.

THURS. - 6:30 - BUTLER AREA LAYMEN'S DINNER AND MEETING

WILL BE AT OUR CHURCH. J. BRENNAN WILL BE GUEST

SPEAKER. SEE BOB TAIT AND J. WALTER HARMON FOR TICKETS.

HOSPITALIZED: MRS. DOROTHY NICHOLAS, MRS. TRESA
NICHOLAS. MRS. AMELIA DREHER IS AT HER DAUGHTER'S
HOME AND NEEDS OUR PRAYERS - ADDRESS IS % G. W. LIGHT,
600 E. PROSPECT ST. GIRARD, OHIO 44420.

NEXT SUNDAY IS OPEN FOR FLOWERS - PLEASE LEAVE BEA
KNOW THIS MORNING IF YOU ARE INTERESTED - \$8.00.

ANY MEMBER OF THE CONGREGATION WHO WOULD LIKE TO
TAKE PART IN A WORSHIP SERVICE AT THE SUNNYVIEW HOME
ON MONDAY FEBRUARY 24, AT 1:15 P.M. IS INVITED. WE
NEED SOME PEOPLE TO HELP SING AND WE COULD USE A
PIANO PLAYER.

THE YOUTH FELLOWSHIP MEETS EVERY OTHER WEEK (TONIGHT)
JR. YOUTH - GRADES 5, 6, 7, 8 - WITH MR. & MRS. ROBERT
SYBERT AND REV. & MRS. LINK. SR. YOUTH - GRADES 9,
10, 11, 12 - MR. & MRS. DAVID CURTIS AND MR. & MRS.
JEFFREY STAUFFER. ALL YOUTH ARE WELCOME TO / END.

WELCOME VISITORS, SIGN CARD/BOOK.

signs but ch go community
 this good,
 but there great diff tween ch go & Xpian comm
 D. f is Ch Goer hung up on goodness/self-right,
 like a pharisee & works
 Be a Xpian is b 1 thru whom Js seen by way of life
 Let us strive B Xians insted But ch goers.

"Piece By Piece -- Decapolis!"

Text: Mark 7:37, "He hath done all things well;
 He maketh both the deaf to hear
 and the dumb to speak."

Scripture: Mark 7:31-37

2nd piece Lenten puzzle/C Js on move again
 Red in scrip Js depart Tyre thru Sidon, 2 S of Gal
 2 Decapolis
 Like say go Butler 2 Erie 2 go Fgh
 T 25 mi N Sidon, then S 2 S of Gal, then Decapolis
 Decapolis large area/10 towns (Greek)
 Again, no know where He at
 All know is- T 2 S then S of Gal 2 Decap.
 Prob took 8 mths/& much happ not record Gospels
 All while travel Gent territory
 Calm B4 storm so speak/threatened when return Jews
 Read vs 33, deaf.partial dumb
 vs 33, Js take aside/not show off/want privacy
 (who want dr work him in public)
 vs 33 b fingers in ears & spit
 saliva medicinal value ancient times
 vs 34 look 2 G, sorce miracles/spk Aramaic
 Mark tell truth/Ara vs Gr. 2 man deaf
 vs 35, ears opened tongue loosed.
 vs 36 no tell/but did,
 vs 37 TEXT READ
 Peop no silent/ big buildup ALL THINGS WELL
 all this G Js miracle worker
 Mark words famil ring/Gen 1:31, God saw all He
made and behold it was very good."
 po' out Is 35:5, eyes opened/ears unstopped/lame
leap, dumb speak.
 Messiah which Js was/He do things no ord man do
 Book Bill McLeod/coal miner/preach 2 them
 then church/woman cancer healed/man wheel chair
 peop 4 give relatives/friends/give back money etc.
 spread N west US/ other parts
 Next month here But/Cal Pres Ch. evenings
 We live day when peop just deaf/dumb as man Scrip
 2 many peop no want anything intervene cosy/easy
 lives
 But G has way step in & alter
 As Js step 4th open ears/mouth so G can open 2 day
 all this we instru thru G works
 If sp dumb/deaf, we no use 2 Master like Decap
 Js on way 2 cross
 If sp filled can G mod mirac Bcause G use us
 Need 2 pray 4 open ears/eyes/mouths

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
 Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
 Ethan and Alisha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)









Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.